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SUBJECT: JULY 22 UNSC OPEN DEBATE ON POST-CONFLICT
PEACEBUILDING

[1](#)1. This is an action request, please see paragraph three.

[1](#)2. On June 11, 2009, the UN Secretary-General issued his report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of a conflict. On July 22, Uganda will convene a meeting of the UN Security Council on the report and post-conflict peacebuilding. In commenting on the report and post-conflict peacebuilding, USUN should draw from the points in paragraph 3, as appropriate, and provide the Department with a read-out of the session.

[1](#)3. Begin points.

We welcome the Secretary-General,s timely report on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict.

The importance of getting peacebuilding right cannot be overestimated. Conflict rarely "ends8 completely or irreversibly. Too many countries that have endured the hardships of war or armed conflict experience persistent violence and instability. Too often, they confront delays in the restoration of governance and the establishment of conditions for social and economic recovery. The opportunities for post-conflict countries to lay the foundations for sustainable peace are at their highest) as well as the most easily missed) in the earliest stages of a peace process. We appreciate the Secretary-General,s report shining a light on this critical phase.

Let me first touch on a few issues raised in the Report and then offer some comments about the longer-term peacebuilding challenge.

We broadly agree with the Report,s analysis and recommendations, starting with the insistence that post-conflict countries need to be in the driver's seat of their own recovery. Of all the multiple issues that cry out for attention in post-conflict environments, the overriding goal has to be helping national and local authorities develop the capacity and tools to manage their own transition and recovery in ways that are inclusive, conflict-reducing, and sustainable.

The UN, regional actors, donors, and others now increasingly recognize this priority. We have also made progress in reorienting the way we do business to help achieve it.

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) has played a useful role

in this regard in Burundi, Sierra Leone, and now Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic. Beyond countries on the PBC agenda, we would welcome initiatives to learn further from other countries which have successfully made the war-to-peace transition, including fellow PBC members.

We still have a long way to go to make national ownership more than a slogan, however, and to ensure that our various forms of assistance genuinely contribute to the essential tasks of statebuilding in post-conflict environments.

That the same priorities often recur across countries gives us a good indication of where we must deliver targeted support: demobilizing and reintegrating combatants, reforming security sectors, and establishing safe and secure environments for the population; transitioning from bullets to ballots and restarting political processes in which the entire society can safely participate; ensuring basic service delivery, including the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees; supporting the restoration of core government capacities, especially public finance and administration that is transparent and accountable; and providing the resources for early and lasting economic recovery.

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The Report gives us a clear roadmap for much of what the UN system, for its part, needs to do to ensure that UN assistance to countries undergoing post-conflict transition is well-conceived, well-led, and sufficiently resourced. We strongly agree with the report's recommendations on strategy, leadership, and managerial accountability, which we see as essential to the UN's ability to deliver the kind of support that national authorities ask for. To this day, too many of our collective efforts remain fragmented and inconsistent, posing unnecessary burdens on post-conflict authorities at precisely their most fragile stage. Of course, many actors beyond the UN contribute to this fragmentation, but a well-coordinated UN can provide a strong platform for unity of effort.

We strongly welcome the Report's emphasis on the need for rapid deployment of high-quality leadership and for small, multi-disciplinary teams to backstop it. Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs) have a particular responsibility to ensure that UN assistance to national authorities is effective and well-coordinated. The measures detailed in the Report to strengthen and support the SRSG role are sensible and overdue. We would further note that all members of the UN family have a related responsibility to ensure that UN efforts are integrated under the overall leadership of the SRSG, or Resident Coordinator where no SRSG is in place.

We take note of the proposals to improve the UN's civilian capacity, and agree that an effective civilian response is at the core of international efforts to contribute to sustainable peace.

We particularly welcome the Report's emphasis on southern capacity, an under-tapped and invaluable resource, and we look forward to exploring ways to diversify the expertise, knowledge, and resources that can be brought to bear in peacebuilding environments. The Secretary-General's proposal to explore innovative deployment of UN Volunteers is also of interest.

We also note the Report's comments and recommendations on post-conflict finance. It is true that the donor community needs to do a better job of delivering early and flexible assistance as well as tailoring its support to the unique needs of post-conflict situations. We note the leadership of Sweden and the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the context

of the OECD's Accra Action Agenda, in seeking to identify more effective modes of financing for early recovery and generally welcome fresh ideas in this regard.

We do believe that the report could have gone farther in clarifying internal division of labor within the UN system, and we look forward to a rapid and decisive conclusion of that work.

We stress the importance of the Secretary-General's personal commitment to seeing through these recommendations. We further note the need for his continuing personal engagement in ensuring an effectively coordinated UN response in post-conflict situations. The Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) provides the Secretary-General with an important tool to help fulfill these responsibilities, alongside its function of supporting the PBC.

Soon, Member States will have had the opportunity to consider in close succession: the Secretary-General's report on mediation; the current report on peacebuilding; and the New Horizons non-paper prepared by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS). All three topics are of course closely interconnected. We believe that we need to give thought to how best to move forward on these interrelated issues in an integrated way.

Turning to broader peacebuilding questions, we would like to reaffirm the importance the United States attaches to the peacebuilding agenda.

Let us return to this simple proposition: ensuring that a

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national government has the capacity and tools in place to manage its own transition and recovery is the key goal of peacebuilding. And real capacity building cannot be delayed until the day an international security presence leaves, or the risk of conflict relapse will be high) a phenomenon we have witnessed in Haiti and elsewhere. This squanders human, political, and financial capital, and threatens both security and development.

Efforts to build national capacity to manage a country's own recovery must instead start early so that those capacities are well advanced when an international security presence eventually draws down.

Many countries have much to contribute to this process. For example, we would like to pay tribute to Brazil's important peacebuilding role in Haiti; and India's, Pakistan's, and others contributions to post-conflict reconstruction in Afghanistan. Discussions of post-conflict peacebuilding too often assume a north-south division among donors, troop contributors, and others. The reality is more diverse) a fact that the PBC can do more to take note of and encourage.

As a member of the PBC, and as a Permanent Member of the Security Council, we will work to ensure that the Council takes earlier account of peacebuilding needs in making decisions about peace operations, reviewing mandates, and generally exercising its core responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security. We have already noted in the recent thematic debate on peacekeeping presided over by Turkey that we intend earlier consideration of the recovery and peacebuilding activities needed to enable peacekeeping operations to carry out their mandates successfully and, on that basis, eventually conclude. This in no way signals an intention to consider abrupt or premature downsizing. Quite the contrary: it is a sign that we recognize the need for early and sustained attention to the requirements of peacebuilding alongside peacekeeping in the interests of an ultimately successful transition to durable peace.

To this end, we welcome early dialogue with the PBC and an opportunity to benefit from advice and ideas developed in this body, as well as from peacebuilding expertise and perspectives from elsewhere. The seriousness of the issues at stake requires that we move beyond some of the concerns about respective prerogatives that have in the past preoccupied us.

We see no contradiction between the Council's primacy in the oversight of UN peacekeeping missions, on the one hand, and the PBC beginning early preparation with post-conflict authorities on economic development and national capacity building.

Finally, as PBC members, we see value in revitalizing that aspect of our original mandate that encourages close cooperation between the Bretton Woods Institutions and the United Nations.

As we look ahead to the 2010 review of the PBC, we will keep all of these issues in mind, and look forward to working closely with all of you in order to strengthen the UN's ability to help countries emerging from conflict build the lasting peace they deserve.

End points.
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